

Teaching Methods and Strategies that Integrate Cultural Ideas in Piano Education: Exploration from a Global Perspective

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Abstract: In today's interconnected world, students are increasingly exposed to diverse cultures. The rise of multiculturalism in education opens doors to a richer piano learning experience for students and beyond mastering fundamental playing skills, students can now explore a wider range of learning content. This study aims to explore innovative teaching methods and strategies that integrate cultural ideas into piano education. The study involved 73 participants, with a nearly even gender distribution and ages primarily between 16-20. Culturally, the group was diverse, with representation from African, American, Chinese, and European backgrounds. Survey results indicated that over half the participants encountered music from diverse cultures "Sometimes" or "Often" in their piano lessons, and Alfred emerged as the most preferred method for cultural integration. Students generally agreed that cultural integration methods enhanced music appreciation, with the highest score for learning music from different cultures. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed no significant difference in how students perceived the effectiveness of the four specific cultural integration techniques presented. Our findings suggest that cultural integration can be a valuable tool for enhancing student engagement and music appreciation in piano lessons.

Keywords: Culture, Piano, Alfred, Student, Learning and Education

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, students are increasingly exposed to diverse cultures. As a result, music educators are re-evaluating curriculum content to ensure it reflects this global reality. Over the past five decades, there's been a growing emphasis on incorporating music from various cultural traditions into school music. Research highlights the numerous benefits of this approach. Studies have shown that exposure to a wider range of music can enhance students' cultural awareness (Southcott & Joseph, 2010), foster intercultural understanding (Crawford, 2020), enrich their musical experiences (Cleland & Fleet, 2021), and reduce prejudice (Miranda & Gaudreau, 2020). Additionally, it can broaden their musical horizons (Hess, 2010) and cultivate a deeper appreciation for their own heritage while fostering respect for others (Nethsinghe, 2012). However,

achieving complete authenticity in the classroom presentation of music from diverse cultures can be challenging. Music is a living art form, constantly evolving alongside the societies that create it (Montemayor et al., 2018). Despite this, educators can strive to create culturally appropriate learning experiences through ongoing research and collaboration (Campbell, 2017; Yoo, 2017). This ensures that students gain a meaningful understanding and appreciation for the richness and diversity of global music traditions. In our increasingly interconnected world, cultures are constantly interacting and influencing each other. This diversity presents exciting opportunities for piano educators. By embracing multiculturalism, piano teachers can broaden their pedagogical approaches and create a more enriching learning experience for students (Stogianni et al., 2021). Research by (Virgona & Kashima, 2021) suggests that multiculturalism fosters innovation in educational settings. When applied to piano instruction, this translates to incorporating elements from various musical traditions. In today's multicultural classrooms, effective piano instruction requires adaptability and a focus on individual student needs. In classrooms around the world, teachers strive to create engaging and effective learning environments. However, the impact of these efforts can vary greatly among students. Some learners lose interest and motivation, failing to find the joy or satisfaction that ignites a passion for learning. Research by Costa-Giomi sheds light on this phenomenon (Costa-Giomi, 2004). The study examined the intrinsic motivation of piano students in the 4th grade. The findings revealed that a significant portion of the students found piano lessons uninteresting. This lack of internal drive suggested that many were primarily continuing their lessons due to external pressures, such as parental expectations. The Hal Leonard piano method utilizes a clear and engaging approach to teaching fingering techniques (Shavkatovna, 2022). Colourful illustrations paired with easy-to-understand text help students of all ages grasp proper finger placement. However, the method shines particularly for adult learners. It delves deeper into fingering concepts, exploring the sequential movements of figures (musical patterns) and the strategic use of different finger combinations during performance. These elements, which require a higher level of understanding and retention, make the Hal Leonard method a valuable tool for adult students seeking to refine their playing technique (Du, 2022). According to (Du, 2022; Shavkatovna, 2022), Alfred's All-in-One Piano Course is a targeted curriculum designed for young piano beginners. The course unfolds across

five books, each packed with engaging features to make learning fun and effective. One key element is the clear definition of musical terms. These definitions are conveniently highlighted in bright pink boxes located in the upper left corner of the page. This approach ensures students have easy access to important concepts as they encounter them in the music. Another engaging feature is the clapping exercise. Found in the upper right corner of the page, these exercises introduce new musical rhythm symbols. Students can then practice applying these symbols in the following music piece, solidifying their understanding. The course also incorporates duet parts on some pages. This allows teachers and students to collaborate on a piece together. These duets not only provide valuable listening practice for students, allowing them to follow the teacher's steady beat, but also foster a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment through collaborative music-making. Alfred's Adult Piano Course caters specifically to adult beginners, offering a streamlined approach to acquiring musical knowledge. The course prioritizes appreciating beautiful music pieces as a way to learn key concepts, terms, chords, intervals, and progressions.

The Faber and Faber Piano Adventures method stands out for its broad range of musical styles. Folk songs, jazz pieces, and other genres are incorporated to keep students of all ages – from young children to adults and even seniors – engaged and motivated throughout their learning journey (Van Sickle, 2011). Experienced teachers can utilize the method's effective and approachable approach to cater to the specific needs of each student demographic. For instance, the curriculum incorporates colourful graphics to enhance visual learning, while practical suggestions – such as counting aloud while practicing – provide valuable guidance for young beginners. These features, along with other interactive elements, make the learning process not only effective but also enjoyable for students of all ages. In contrast, the Bastien piano method focuses on building a strong foundation in music theory and practical skills for piano beginners aged 7 and above (Van Sickle, 2011). It incorporates five distinct yet interconnected components: Technique, Piano, Performance, Theory, and Supplemental Books. This comprehensive approach equips students with a well-rounded understanding of essential techniques, music theory concepts, and practical exercises. Through this method, beginners gain insights into basic dynamics, counting rhythms, and phrasing techniques, all while developing the skills necessary to practice and perform music effectively (Shavkatovna, 2022). Many factors contribute to a young

student's motivation to learn piano. Studies suggest that teachers can play a crucial role by fostering a sense of ownership in the learning process (Gerelus et al., 2020). This can involve incorporating student preferences in music selection and practice routines. Additionally, it's important to strike a balance between practice intensity and fostering persistence, ensuring that challenges are stimulating without becoming overwhelming. Adults bring a unique perspective to the piano learning journey. Their diverse backgrounds, life stages, and psychological factors all contribute to individual learning styles (Roulston et al., 2015). In comparison to younger students who often rely on external encouragement, adults tend to value autonomy and self-direction in their learning. Their primary motivations may stem from personal goals, a desire for specific activities, or a general interest in learning.

1.1 Rationale and Objective

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected, and music education should reflect this reality. Traditional piano teaching methods often focus on a narrow range of musical styles and cultures. This can limit students' understanding and appreciation of music, and hinder their ability to connect with music from different backgrounds. This study aims to explore innovative teaching methods and strategies that integrate cultural ideas into piano education. By incorporating music from diverse cultures, we can expand students' musical knowledge and appreciation, develop intercultural competence, foster creativity and innovation and create a more inclusive learning environment.

2. METHODS

2.1 Study Design

Our study adopted a mixed-methods research design to explore how cultural ideas are integrated into piano education using four specific piano methods: Hal Leonard, Faber and Faber, Bastien, and Alfred. The research was conducted at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, an international school with a diverse student body. Data collection involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

2.2 Participants

Seventy-eight participants were recruited using a random sampling

method from the student body of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, an international school known for its diverse student population. Participants included individuals from African, American, Chinese, and European backgrounds, ensuring a broad cultural representation. To be eligible for the study, participants had to be at least 16 years old and possess a high school graduation certificate (or equivalent). The study adhered to ethical research principles. All participants provided informed consent after receiving a detailed explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. The research protocol received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and participant anonymity was guaranteed throughout the study.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection employed a mixed-methods approach. First, an online survey was administered to all 78 participants through a secure online platform. The 15-minute survey consisted of 20 questions, including multiple-choice items on demographics and cultural background, Likert scale questions to gauge perceptions of cultural integration methods, and open-ended questions to explore preferred piano teaching methods in relation to cultural integration. A total of 73 completed surveys were retrieved, representing a strong response rate. After completing the survey, participants were debriefed on the study's objectives and thanked for their valuable contribution.

In the second phase following the survey, a qualitative approach was employed through focus group discussions. Researchers conducted sessions with smaller, diverse student groups (8-10 participants) lasting approximately 25 minutes each. These discussions centered on student experiences with cultural integration in their piano lessons. The focus group guide, comprising at least 10 open-ended questions, aimed to elicit insights into specific examples of how teachers integrate cultural ideas using the different piano methods (Hal Leonard, Faber and Faber, Bastien, and Alfred). Additionally, the discussions explored student engagement and preferences for various cultural integration strategies, along with any challenges they encountered and suggestions for improvement.

2.4 Data Analysis

All numerical statistical analyses were performed in GraphPad Prism at a statistical significance of 5% ($p < .05$) using descriptive statistics and

inferential statistics. Quantitative data from surveys were analysed statistically to identify trends and patterns in how teachers integrate cultural ideas across different regions and teaching methods. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were thematically analysed to identify common themes and best practices in integrating cultural ideas using the four piano methods.

3. RESULTS

Seventy-three participants responded to the survey, with the majority falling within the 16-20 age range (35 participants, 47.9%). The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 38 males (52.1%) and 35 females (47.9%). In terms of year of study, freshmen comprised the largest group (20 participants, 27.0%), followed closely by sophomores (18 participants, 24.7%), juniors (16 participants, 21.9%), and seniors (19 participants, 26.0%). Culturally, the participant pool was diverse, with representation from African (12 participants, 16.4%), American (18 participants, 24.7%), Chinese (27 participants, 37.0%), and European backgrounds (16 participants, 21.9%) (see Table 1).

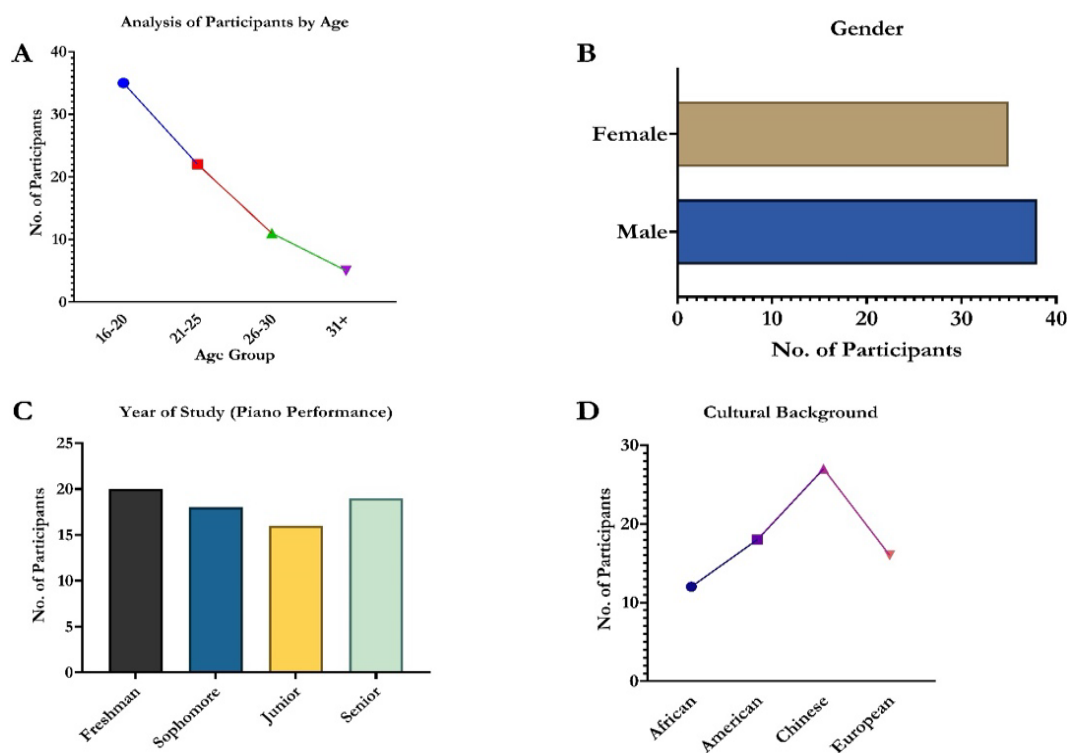


Figure 1: Column Charts and Line Graph Distribution of Participant Demographics based on Age (A), Gender (B), Year of Study in Piano Performance (C) and Cultural Background (D).

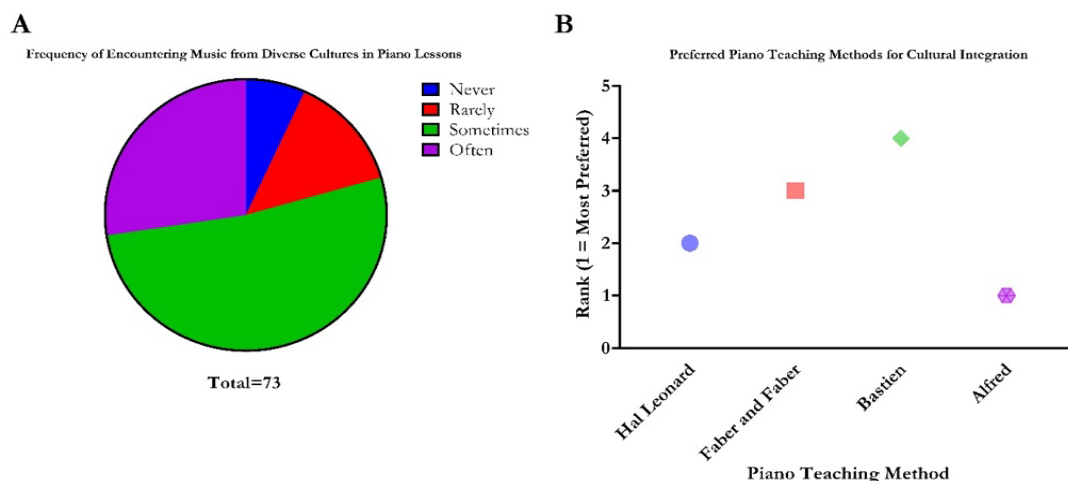


Figure 2: Preferred Piano Teaching Methods for Cultural Integration (B) and Frequency of Encountering Music from Diverse Cultures in Piano Lessons (A).

In Figure 2A, seventy-three participants responded to a survey on the frequency of encountering music from diverse cultures in their piano lessons. Over half (38 participants, 52.1%) reported encountering such music "Sometimes," while 20 participants (27.4%) indicated this happened "Often." Less frequent exposure was reported by 10 participants (13.7%) who said it occurred "Rarely," and 5 participants (6.8%) who encountered it "Never." In Figure 2B, seventy-three participants ranked their preferred piano teaching methods for cultural integration. Alfred emerged as the most favourable choice, with 23 participants (31.5%) placing it at rank 1. Hal Leonard followed closely at rank 2 (N = 22, 30.1%), while Faber and Faber (rank 3, N = 3, 23.3%) and Bastien (rank 4, N = 11, 15.1%) received progressively lower rankings.

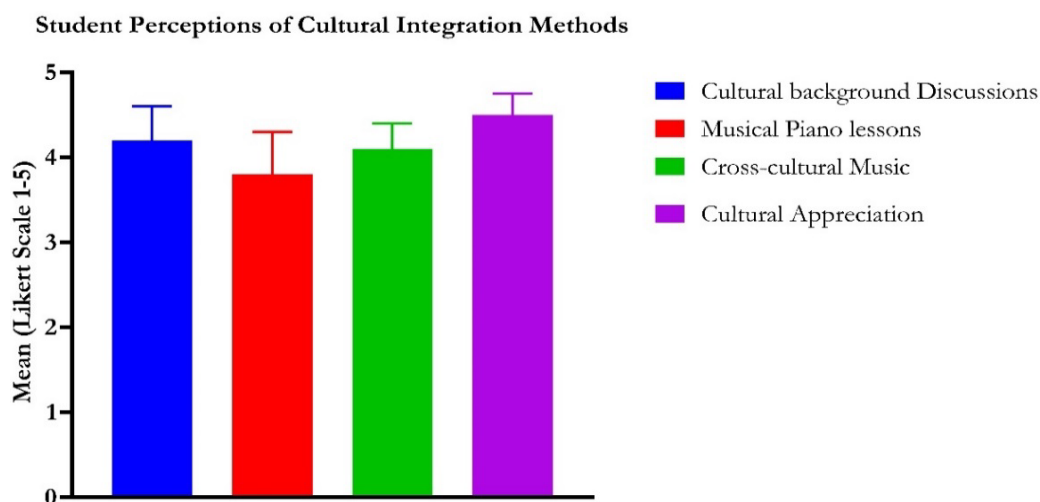


Figure 3: Student Perceptions of Cultural Integration Methods (Likert Scale 1-5, Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree) based on Teachers to Discuss the Cultural Background of Composers; Piano Lessons include Music from Different Cultures; Teachers Encourage Students to Explore the Musical Traditions of Other Countries and Learning Music from Different Cultures Helps me Appreciate Music More.

In Figure 3, students expressed generally positive perceptions of cultural integration methods in piano lessons. The highest mean score ($M = 4.5$, $SD = 0.25$) indicated strong agreement that learning music from different cultures enhances overall music appreciation. Scores for discussing composer background ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.4$) and encouraging exploration of musical traditions ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.3$) were also positive, while including music from diverse cultures received a slightly lower mean score ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 0.5$).

Table 1: Kruskal-Wallis Test - Techniques for Cultural Integration

Technique (Independent Variable)	N	Mean Rank		
Discussing Composer Background	22	4.2		
Exploring Traditional Instruments	17	3.8		
Learning Music From Different Periods	11	4.1		
Comparing Musical Styles	23	4.5		
Statistic	Value	df	Asympt. Sig. (p-value)	
Chi-Square	2.12	3	0.256	

In Table 1, the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed no statistically significant difference (Chi-Square = 2.12, $df = 3$, $p = 0.256$) in how students perceived the effectiveness of the four cultural integration techniques (discussing composer background, exploring traditional instruments, learning music from different periods, and comparing musical styles). While mean ranks ranged from 3.8 (exploring traditional instruments) to 4.5 (comparing musical styles), these variations did not reach the level of statistical significance.

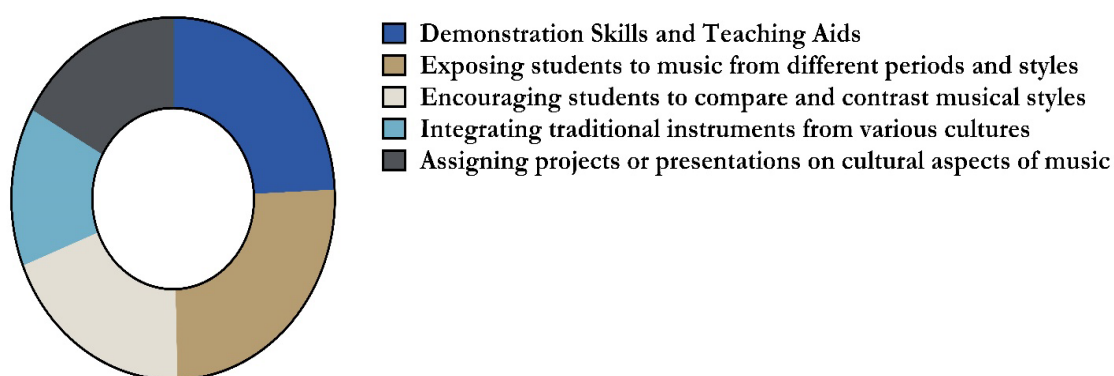


Figure 4: A Pie Chart Distribution of the Techniques Used for Cultural Integration

In Figure 4, the survey revealed that a majority of respondents ($n=73$) encountered various techniques for cultural integration in their piano lessons. The most prevalent technique was exposing students to music from diverse periods and styles (68 participants, 93.2%), followed closely

by demonstration skills and teaching aids (65 participants, 89.0%). Over half (52 participants, 71.2%) reported being encouraged to compare and contrast musical styles. Assigning projects or presentations on cultural aspects of music (45 participants, 61.6%) and integrating traditional instruments from various cultures (38 participants, 52.1%) were also implemented, though to a lesser extent.

Table 2: Examples of Cultural Integration Techniques Across Piano Methods

Piano Method	Examples of Cultural Integration Techniques
Hal Leonard	* Discussing the historical context and cultural influences on composers like Chopin (e.g., Polish folk music) * Including short pieces by composers from diverse cultures (e.g., Chinese folk melodies) * Encouraging students to explore improvisation inspired by different musical styles
Faber and Faber	* Focusing on learning traditional dances from various cultures alongside their associated music (e.g., waltz and Viennese culture) * Analysing music theory concepts through the lens of different musical systems (e.g., Indian raga scales) * Providing opportunities for students to compose short pieces reflecting different cultural influences
Bastien	* Integrating activities like learning basic greetings and musical vocabulary in different languages * Exploring the connection between music and cultural celebrations from around the world (e.g., Carnival in Brazil) * Encouraging students to research the instruments used in traditional music of different cultures
Alfred	* Matching specific exercises with cultural themes (e.g., using blues scales for improvisation exercises) * Introducing students to different piano performance styles from diverse cultures (e.g., classical vs. jazz) * Providing opportunities for collaborative performances showcasing music from different backgrounds

In Table 2, the four piano methods (Hal Leonard, Faber and Faber, Bastien, Alfred) each employed a variety of cultural integration techniques. Hal Leonard focused on composers' backgrounds and short pieces from diverse cultures, while Faber and Faber incorporated traditional dances and music theory with a global perspective. Bastien integrated language and celebrations, while Alfred linked exercises to cultural themes and piano performance styles, encouraging collaborative performances that celebrated musical diversity.

Table 3: Student Engagement and Preferences for Cultural Integration

Theme	Quote
Increased Interest and Motivation	"Learning about the cultural background of music makes it more interesting and helps me connect with the pieces on a deeper level." (Student from European background)
Deeper Understanding of Music	"Exploring different musical styles helps me appreciate the diversity of music around the world." (Student from American background)
Preference for Interactive Activities	"I enjoy hands-on activities like playing traditional instruments, as they make learning about different cultures more engaging." (Student from African background)
Desire for Broader Cultural Exploration	"It would be great to learn more about the composers' lives and the historical context of the music beyond just the cultural background." (Student from Chinese background)

In Table 3, students expressed increased interest and a deeper understanding of music through cultural integration. Quotes highlighted the value of learning cultural backgrounds (European student) and exploring musical styles (American student). Interactive activities like playing traditional instruments were preferred (African student), while a desire for broader exploration beyond cultural background, including composers' lives and historical context, was also noted (Chinese student).

Table 4: Challenges and Suggestions for Improvement

Theme	Quote
Limited Time for Cultural Integration	"Sometimes, there isn't enough time in lessons to delve deeply into cultural aspects of music." (Student from European background)
Need for More Resources and Activities	"I would like to see more resources available, like recordings of traditional music and videos showcasing different cultures." (Student from American background)
Importance of Teacher Knowledge and Enthusiasm	"A teacher's passion for different cultures makes a big difference in how engaging the lessons are." (Student from African background)
Balancing Cultural Integration with Technical Skills	"It's important to learn about culture, but we also need to focus on developing our piano skills." (Student from Chinese background)

In Table 4, students identified challenges in balancing cultural integration with technical development (Chinese student). Limited lesson time for cultural exploration (European student) and a desire for more resources like recordings and videos (American student) were mentioned. Teacher passion for different cultures was seen as crucial for engaging lessons (African student).

4. DISCUSSION

Our study investigated student experiences with cultural integration in piano lessons. Many participants (52.1%) reported encountering music from diverse cultures "Sometimes" or "Often" in their lessons. Alfred emerged as the most preferred piano teaching method for cultural integration, while techniques like exposing students to music from different periods and styles were the most prevalent. The Kruskal-Wallis test indicated no significant difference in how students perceived the effectiveness of the four specific cultural integration techniques employed (discussing composer background, exploring traditional instruments, learning music from different periods, comparing musical styles). Our findings were consistent with previous studies in suggesting that the Alfred piano method is a popular choice for students. It offers a well-rounded curriculum that incorporates various elements for a successful learning experience. Students develop performing techniques, gain a deeper understanding of music through clear explanations, and build a foundation in music theory. A unique aspect of the Alfred method is its emphasis on creativity. Theory lessons are interwoven with engaging activities like music puzzles, games, and even opportunities for students to compose their own short pieces. Additionally, the curriculum incorporates historical context, introducing students to the development of musical concepts and the works of famous composers (GÜRLER, 2021; Zakaria & Mahzair, 2020). Our analysis posits that while the method focuses heavily on visual learning through colourful graphics and the concept of "position playing" – which simplifies note location on the staff – it does place less emphasis on developing aural skills through listening exercises. However, this visual approach can be particularly beneficial for younger students, as it helps them grasp musical concepts and fosters a positive learning experience. Our qualitative data from focus groups highlighted various themes related to student engagement and preferences. Students expressed increased interest, motivation, and a deeper understanding of music through cultural exploration. Interactive activities, demonstration and teaching aids like playing traditional instruments were favoured, while a desire for broader exploration beyond cultural background, including composers' lives and historical context, was also noted. Research suggests that student motivation thrives when the psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and connection are met. By creating a supportive and engaging environment that fosters a sense of accomplishment and choice, teachers can empower young students to find joy and motivation in their piano

journeys. Moreover, instilling a love of learning in piano beginners is key to their long-term success (Cheng & Southcott, 2023). Effective teaching strategies and methods are crucial for igniting intrinsic motivation, leading to deeper engagement and ultimately, greater achievement. Positive reinforcement and celebrating progress are vital for fostering a child's confidence and encouraging them to continue learning. For instance, we propose that consider tailoring lesson length to a beginner's attention span. Half-hour blocks of formal instruction might be overwhelming, while shorter, more focused sessions can maintain motivation and learning efficiency. Previous studies have suggested that traditionally, piano lessons have placed a heavy emphasis on sight-reading skills, prioritizing conceptual understanding at the beginner level (Du, 2022; Engel et al., 2012). However, these methods often lack a strong focus on ear training, which is an essential skill for developing musicality. We presuppose that ear training can involve improvisation and chord practice, but it can also be fostered through engaging activities that incorporate games, visual and auditory elements, and even physical movement. By incorporating these diverse elements into their teaching, instructors can cater to the varied needs of students from different backgrounds, ensuring a well-rounded learning experience that appeals to sight, touch, hearing, and cognitive abilities.

Findings from previous studies have suggested that effective piano lessons often begin with well-designed warm-up activities. These activities serve several purposes: they help prevent injuries, reactivate muscle memory, and develop aural skills – all in a fun and engaging way (Zakaria & Mahzair, 2020). We suggest that one creative warm-up approach involves using finger puppets. Teachers can guide students through stretches for their fingers, wrists, hands, shoulders, and arms while manipulating the puppets and reciting rhymes. This playful activity loosens up muscles and captures the attention of young learners. Another engaging warm-up technique involves combining singing and playing. Students can sing along to a familiar song while the teacher plays a corresponding melody on the piano. We propose that effective piano demonstrations should begin by sparking the student's interest. Teachers can achieve this by playing a short piece of music, drawing the student in with the beauty of the instrument. Following this introduction, the teacher can then transition into a patient demonstration of the key elements of the piece. This might involve focusing on specific techniques, highlighting finger movements, or demonstrating how to play particular sections. It's crucial

to break down the piece into manageable chunks, allowing beginners to focus on one logical section at a time. This targeted approach ensures a deeper understanding and a higher quality of learning. After repeated practice of these smaller sections at different tempos and rhythms, students can then begin to confidently piece them together, building their skills and progressing steadily. We found that in piano education, demonstrations are a cornerstone of effective teaching. By observing their teacher perform various skills and techniques, students gain a clear understanding of proper execution. This visual learning experience empowers them to begin developing their own playing techniques (Simones et al., 2017). Furthermore, demonstrations open a valuable communication channel between teachers and students. Teachers can use this opportunity to highlight key aspects of technique and answer any questions that may arise, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding and improving learning outcomes. One common demonstration technique involves playing musical phrases, focusing on specific elements and movements that are crucial for beginners to grasp. Through clear and effective demonstrations, teachers can create a more interactive learning environment, enabling students to improve their posture, technique, and overall learning efficiency. Similarly, previous scholars have alluded that the landscape of piano education is constantly evolving, with new teaching materials, methods, and techniques emerging all the time. To keep students engaged and motivated, teachers must find a way to bridge the gap between traditional methods and these innovative practices (Egilmez, 2012). However, navigating the diverse learning styles and motivations of individual students can be a complex challenge. To address this, effective teachers strive to understand each student's unique preferences, goals, and learning styles. By tailoring their approach to these individual needs, they can create personalized learning plans that optimize outcomes. We noted that challenges identified by students included limited time for cultural integration in lessons and a need for more resources. Teacher passion for different cultures was seen as a key factor in fostering engaging lessons, while students emphasized the importance of balancing cultural integration with developing strong piano skills. Piano education has traditionally focused on Western classical music. But the world of music is vast and vibrant, encompassing a wealth of cultural expressions. Integrating these diverse musical traditions into piano lessons can be a rewarding experience for both teachers and student. In the realm of human experience, music education, particularly piano, plays a special role. It fosters not just

intellectual development and technical skill, but also a deep connection to creativity and self-expression. Yet, many students struggle to maintain motivation on their musical journeys. This calls for piano instructors to become adept at understanding and nurturing the individual spark that ignites a passion for playing. By tailoring their teaching methods to the specific needs of each student, instructors can empower them to achieve their musical goals and unlock the lifelong joy that piano playing offers (Cheng & Southcott, 2016). Our study suggests that the Bastien piano method incorporates attractive artwork paired with written assignments, encouraging students to actively apply newly learned concepts. Beyond the fundamentals of theory and technique, the curriculum utilizes these musical masterpieces to provide opportunities for solo performance. Students can explore these pieces as folk songs or even use them as springboards for composing their own original melodies. This approach fosters not only technical skill but also creativity and a love of music. This method recognizes the power of visual engagement and engaging themes. Colourful illustrations capture students' attention, fostering enthusiasm and motivation for learning. These visuals, along with well-structured practice routines, help develop essential technical skills and nurture positive learning habits in young beginners. Additionally, the consistent practice patterns throughout the book offer a sense of familiarity and structure, making it easier for both teachers and students to navigate the learning journey. The Faber and Faber Piano Adventures method offers a versatile curriculum catering to students of all ages, from young children to beginning adult learners (Van Sickle, 2011). We found that a hallmark of this method is the emphasis on sight-reading practice. Students are presented with ample opportunities to solidify their understanding of newly learned concepts through sight-reading exercises. The curriculum goes beyond basic skills, delving into creative applications of music theory. Writing exercises, sight-reading activities, and ear-training exercises all work together to reinforce theoretical knowledge and develop musicality. However, Du suggested that for very young beginners, particularly those aged 3 to 4, traditional notation can be a significant hurdle (Du, 2022). The Faber and Faber method addresses this challenge by introducing the "off-the-staff" approach. This approach utilizes letter names and directional reading to help young students grasp basic note-reading concepts before transitioning to traditional staff notation. The Hal Leonard piano method incorporates a unique element to keep students engaged: a "fun-filled fitness plan" for the fingers. These imaginative activities go beyond

traditional exercises, immersing students in the practice session through playful movement (Ballard, 2007; Cheng & Southcott, 2016). We highlight that these short exercises are particularly well-suited for the beginning of a practice session, helping students warm up their fingers and hands before diving into more formal learning. However, it's important to acknowledge some potential drawbacks. The initial burst of information in the method can be overwhelming for some students, potentially hindering their understanding and leading to frustration. Additionally, the method places less emphasis on developing aural skills through listening exercises. Adult learners are a growing demographic in piano studies, with many choosing piano as their instrument of choice between the ages of 25 and 50 (Lennis-Cortés, 2021). However, research suggests that frustration can quickly set in for adult beginners if they don't see progress within a reasonable timeframe (Adamyan, 2018). One possible explanation is that understanding the motivations that lead adults to piano instruction is therefore crucial. The key to success with adult piano students lies in personalization. One-size-fits-all teaching methods simply won't suffice. Qualified piano instructors must be adaptable, tailoring their approach to meet the individual needs and learning styles of each student. This ensures a more engaging and effective learning experience for all. In the world of piano instruction, striking a balance between introducing new pieces and managing complexity is key. While teachers naturally want to expose students to exciting music, it's crucial to choose pieces that are well-matched to the student's current skill level. This ensures that new concepts are accessible and achievable. Furthermore, effective teachers prioritize ample practice time. By allowing students to repeatedly practice and demonstrate newly acquired skills until they are played fluently and consistently, teachers solidify these skills and pave the way for future learning. This approach ensures that students build a strong foundation upon which they can confidently progress.

5. CONCLUSION

Our findings suggest that cultural integration can be a valuable tool for enhancing student engagement and music appreciation in piano lessons. However, addressing time constraints, providing more resources, and ensuring teacher training in diverse musical traditions could further optimize the integration process. Despite the limitations of generalizability and cultural bias, focusing on a single international school provides a

practical and valuable way to explore how cultural ideas are integrated into piano education using the four specific piano methods.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Henan Province Philosophy and Social Science Planning Annual Project[A Study on the Development Characteristics of General Music Education in China (1950-1988)](NO: 2023BJY043)

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